



GAY AND LESBIAN AWARENESS • BOX 53 • EDMONTON • ALBERTA • T5J 2G9
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GALA NEWSBULLETIN

the last edition (well maybe)!

THE GALA CIVIL RIGHTS COMMITTEE has been working to encourage the government to include sexual orientation in the Individual's Rights Protection Act. You will remember that last year the Alberta Human Rights Commission recommended to the government that sexual orientation be prohibited grounds for discrimination in employment.

AND NOW WE'VE HEARD (AND IT'S NOT GOOD)

We finally recieved a letter from the committee of caucus. For very silly reasons they have decided to drop the proposal. As before, the committee's subservience to the Minister of Labour, Les Young, is obvious. Mr. Young believes that we should stay in the closet, keep our mouth's shut, continue to lie and we will not be discriminated against. Needless to say, we were very disappointed. We have sent a letter of protest to the committee and letters to all MLAs to urge them to ask the Minister to reconsider.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

You can phone your MLA at the legislature or his/her constituency office and express your disappointment. Urge them to ask the Minister of Labour to reconsider. Tell them you need protection. Tell them you may vote for someone else in the next election.

OTHER THINGS THAT HAVE HAPPENED

Early in March we gathered together an impressive group of people who represented churches, labour unions, organizations and individuals for a press conference to indicate to the government that there is broad support for the change to the Individual's Rights Protection Act. The following groups and individuals were present: Betty Marlin for the Alberta Conference of the United Church, Reverends Jane Bramadat and Michael O'Kelly of the Unitarian Church of Canada, Amanda LeRougetel of the Alberta Status of Women Action Committee, Deborah Paul of the Letter Carriers Union of Canada (local 15), Julie David of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, Don Aitken of the Alberta Federation of Labour and a letter of support from the Alberta Union of Public Employees. Ms Sheila Greckol, and Edmonton lawyer, presented a petition signed by over 150 city lawyers and legal academics. They urged the committee of caucus to accept the proposal of the Alberta Human Rights Commission. Ms Greckol also read a letter of support from the United Nurses of Alberta. All these statements, letters of support, and petition were presented to the Chairperson of the Committee of Caucus, Ms Janet Koper, MLA for Calgary Foot-hills soon after.

IS THE GALA CIVIL RIGHTS COMMITTEE DEAD? READ ON..

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?

Certainly the GALA Committee is not dead! We've heard the House of Commons Sub-committee on Equality (Federal) will be visiting the city. They will be studying Sven Robinson's Private Members Bill to include sexual orientation in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We will make a presentation to them when they are in Edmonton. We'll keep you informed as to dates when we receive more information.

Also, during Gay Pride Week we hope to present a Civil Rights Workshop. Again, when details are worked out we'll let you know.

HAS OUR WORK BEEN FOR NOTHING?

Absolutely not! There have been many benefits. Most importantly that lesbians and gays have been able to continue to work together. Though we've had all the difficulties of most large groups of people who work together, we've come together in working relationships as well as forming lasting friendships based on listening to each other and trust. We came out to our MLAs, to the press, and to organizations. We learned a lot about dealing with the government and the press. People came in contact with lesbians and gays for the first time. Many small steps! We think they will pay off in the long run.

GALA 85/GAY PRIDE WEEK

Gay Pride Week in Edmonton is June 20 to 27th. The GALA 85 Organization has been working for months now, planning for this important event. An important part of this week will be an art exhibition and sale. If you are an artist who has been painting, potting, photographing or sculpting in the past year and would like an opportunity to show your work, GALA 85 would like to hear from you. Please call Barry at 469-4286 or Liz at 481-5973.

NEWS FROM AIDS NETWORK

May is AIDS Awareness Month in Edmonton. A number of activities are planned, beginning with a Black and White Party at Flashback on Thursday, April 25th. A forum, films, and spring sale are highlights of the month. For further information contact GATE at 424-8361 or Michael Phair at 426-1516.

SOME MEMBERS OF THE GALA CIVIL RIGHTS COMMITTEE



POEM BY LIZ MASSIAH

No
No to GALA
No to truth
No to honesty, integrity
No to equal rights - Alberta is for all of us
isn't it -- if we are not lesbian or gay

No
Not to guts
No to doing what is fair

No
No to a simple act, to enormous impact
On thousands of us

No
No to providing safety, just like they have
always had

With a change, a simple act

No
No to dignity, to faith in our leaders
No to a fair chance to be heard

But

Never No
to our truth, to our future victory
to our courage, to our pain

Never No
to our belief in truth
To our hope.